UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/11/Add.1
11 July 2001

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on the Promotion and
Protection of Human Rights
Fifty-second session
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Promoting the right to development in the context of the United Nations Decade for the Elimination of Poverty (1997-2006)

Report of the Secretary-General submitted in accordance with Sub-Commission resolution 1999/9

Addendum

1. Following the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General submitted in accordance with Sub-Commission resolution 1999/9, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) submitted a contribution. The substantive information received from UNFPA is summarized below.

2. UNFPA, in its mission statement, emphasizes the universality and indivisibility of human rights, focusing on reproductive rights of women and men and on the promotion of gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women. UNFPA programmes are based on the premise that overall development requires the recognition and exercise of basic human rights, such as the right to reproductive health, and that women must benefit from and participate in development activities as equal partners with men.

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3. UNFPA emphasizes that population and development programmes must focus on meeting the needs and sustaining the rights of the individual. UNFPA recognizes that cultural values can promote or impede human rights in general and the right to development, in particular. Therefore, the Fund stresses the need to identify and strengthen cultural values that would advance human rights and carefully but firmly address those that are less favourable, in the design and implementation of its programmes.

4. UNFPA also contributes to the implementation of the Declaration on the Right to Development through its support for data collection, especially population censuses and household surveys. This support has yielded population-based indicators that have helped create awareness about population and development issues for whole nations, communities and special population groups. It has also helped to identify gaps that exist between women and men in, inter alia, access to education, health and employment.

5. In a continuous effort to promote development activities and respect for all human rights, UNFPA has taken steps to deepen its involvement in United Nations system-wide initiatives in the field of human rights and poverty reduction. UNFPA has also adopted a system for resource allocation that gives priority to the least developed countries, and to the poorest communities within other countries.

6. The programmatic challenges facing UNFPA include the following: helping countries, especially the least developed countries, achieve reproductive health commodity security; meeting the growing demand for reproductive health information and services in both urban and rural areas, especially for the poor; preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and responding to the reproductive health needs of youth; sensitizing women and girls on their fundamental human rights, including their right to development; and supporting national efforts to collect data and develop population-based indicators to assess progress towards the international development goals of the United Nations conferences of the 1990s and those of the Millennium Declaration.